

MAJOR CHANGES AT SILVER LAKE RESERVOIR

Hundreds of Meetings, Thousands of Hours

In 1988, members of the Silver Lake Residents Association (SLRA) & the Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs (CSSLR) joined with numerous other community groups in neighborhoods with open water reservoirs to form the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs (CPOR). These groups agreed to participate in a mediation process with the Department of Water & Power (DWP) on issues having to do with projects that might impact the open water reservoirs and the surrounding neighborhoods. The community groups at Rowena, Hollywood and Stone Canyon Reservoirs each have negotiated solutions to address current water quality regulations in a manner that meets these regulations, addresses community concerns and maintains open space, water features and aesthetics in each of the reservoir neighborhoods.

At Silver Lake, over these past 12+ years, the CPOR delegates have successfully negotiated with DWP to obtain construction mitigation and reservoir landscaping as part of the Ivanhoe reservoir re-lining project and also successfully negotiated the removal of the chlorine depot from the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex to a more appropriate industrial location. The depot, which served all of the City water facilities, had stored chlorine canisters at Silver Lake as far back as anyone could remember.

Master Plan Completed

Five years ago, as part of this mediation, the Silver Lake delegates requested and received a commitment from DWP to develop a Master Plan for the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex (SLRC). This \$135,000 Master Plan was developed by Mia Lehrer + Associates with detailed inputs from the community at 3 well-attended workshops. The Master Plan includes a preliminary plan for anticipated water quality improvement project needs and provides for limited access to the reservoir grounds, a safe and separate walking/jogging path, improved landscaping and a new fence. This Plan was approved by the DWP Board of Commissioners in December 2000. [The Executive Summary of this plan is available on the web site www.silverlake.org].

The first source of Master Plan implementation funding was a \$2.3 million grant from the State of California. Those funds became available on October 1, 2002 after the State budget was signed by the Governor.

Tighter Time Line

During these past 12+ years, many of the regulations that would affect Silver Lake were in the future. The future has arrived. At the time the Master Plan was prepared, the DWP anticipated having to meet new and more stringent water quality requirements by 2015. But, some of the State and Federal regulations have changed, the measuring methods of water contaminant criteria have changed, and some water sources have changed (in some cases because of the Mono Lake litigation and other State-wide water source changes). The DWP realized that the timeline was no longer 2015, but 2006. In January 2002, DWP staff began to consider what options might be possible for meeting the new regulations that would also be acceptable to the community. DWP met frequently with CPOR delegates to obtain input on approaches for balancing regulatory standards with the needs expressed by the community as already outlined by the Master Plan. This dialogue has taken place in the face of what is now a very tight timeframe. This balancing effort was further complicated by the events of September 11th which heightened concerns about terrorist access to the City's water supply at the same time that the Silver Lake community was hoping for greater access and improved recreational opportunities.

Nevertheless, as part of the joint deliberation process with DWP, community representatives have been assured that key concepts in the Master Plan will likely be implemented as part of this water quality improvement project. Final details and implementation schedule of the Plan will be determined as the project planning process moves forward.

The Workshop to be held on Saturday, November 16 will give the entire community a first look at all of the intensive investigation that has culminated in the identification of several realistic options that would meet both the complex technical requirements of the DWP and long term goals of the community.

Most importantly, although the DWP isn't required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to hold a meeting this early in the planning process, the spirit of the on-going mediation and the DWP experience with Rowena, Hollywood and Stone Canyon has shown them that early input from the community is essential for a successful project.

If you want to find out more, see how this water quality improvement project will affect Silver Lake, and to have a say in what happens next, plan to attend on Saturday,

November 16 from 10 am to 2 pm at Marshall High School. There will also be a display of the Master Plan and an update of Phase 1 of the Master Plan implementation and a display from the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) regarding changes to West Silver Lake Drive. The meeting will use an open house format with informational stations and informal displays—plan to spend at least an hour. Staff members of the DWP and members of the community who have been participating in the process will be present at this workshop. They will also be on hand to listen, answer questions and document your suggestions and opinions.